DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 382 836 CE 068 972

AUTHOR Bhaerman, Bob
TITLE Service-Learning and School-to-Work Linkages. AACE Bonus Brief.
INSTITUTION American Association for Career Education, Hermosa Beach, CA.
PUB DATE [95]
NOTE 5p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Active Learning; *Education Work Relationship; *Public Service; Secondary Education; *Student Participation; Student Projects; *Student Volunteers; Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Service Learning

ABSTRACT

Prominent school-to-work observers see a close connection between service-learning and school-to-work programs. Major components of service-learning are as follows: active student participation, thoughtfully organized experiences, focus on community needs and school/community coordination, academic curriculum integration, structured time for reflection, opportunities for application of skills and knowledge, extended learning opportunities, and development of a sense of caring for others. The basic components of school-to-work transition include the following: school-based learning, work-based learning, and connecting activities to coordinate involvement of employers, schools, and students. The reality and importance of both paid and unpaid work in school-to-work transition have been recognized. Both approaches have much in common: contextualize student learning; provide environments in which students can develop various skills and competencies; have the potential to address such weaknesses as the lack of relevance of the curriculum or school experience; motivate students to want to learn; both can build meaningful community partnerships; and focus on outcomes as a measurement of acquired skills and knowledge. Differences exist in goals, beneficiaries, payments, and focus. Key issues in linking the two remain to be resolved: differences in terminology and conceptual focus; teacher professional development; community awareness; states' need for guidance; and the question of compensation. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

American Association For Career Education

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

AACE BONUS BRIEF

Service-Learning and School-to-Work Linkages

Bob Bhaerman

ED 382 836

In this brief, the concepts of service-learning and school-to-work transition are reviewed; linkages, similarities, and differences between service-learning and school-to-work are noted; and several key issues are discussed.

Service-Learning

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 (amended in 1993) defined service-learning as a method of teaching and learning: (1) by which young people learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet community needs and that are coordinated with the school and community; (2) that is integrated into the academic curriculum or provides structured time for a young person to think, talk, or write about what he/she did and saw during the service activity; (3) that provides young people with opportunities to use newly acquired academic skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and (4) that enhances what is taught in the school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community and helps to foster the development of a sense of caring for others (Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform, 1993, p. 71).

The major components of the concept are embodied in the definition, i.e., active student participation, thoughtfully organized experiences, focus on community needs and school/community coordination, academic curriculum integration, structured time for reflection, opportunities for application of skills and knowledge, extended learning opportunities, and development of a sense of caring for others. Service-learning, in short, provides a holistic vision of the learning process.

The term "service-learning" (with and without the hyphen) increasingly has appeared in the recent educational literature, reflecting the fact that the concept has emerged as a popular educational strategy. Does it matter that sometimes a hyphen is used to connect the two words and sometimes it is not? Perhaps it does. The hyphen implies that a two-way street exists, that is, service is enhanced through learning and learning is enhanced through service. The two words are inseparable. It is not a question of one word modifying the other. Both are of equal value and, hence, should be connected to illustrate their unbreakable linkage.

School-to-Work Transition

The three basic program components of school-to-work transition include: (1) school-based learning that provides career exploration and counseling, instruction in a career major (selected no later than the 11th grade), a program of study based on high academic and skill standards, and periodic evaluations to identify students' academic strengths and weaknesses; (2) work-based learning that provides a planned program of job training experiences, paid work experience, workplace mentoring, and instruction in general workplace competencies and in a broad variety of elements of an industry; and (3) connecting activities that coordinate the involvement of employers, schools, and students, that match students and work-based learning opportunities, and that train teachers, mentors, and counselors. Successful

This brief is based on a section of a forthcoming monograph on Service-Learning: A Dimension of Systemic Educational Reform by B. Bhaerman, B. Gomez, and K. Cordell.

CE 068 972

 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

completion of a school-to-work program will lead to a high school diploma; a certificate or diploma from a postsecondary institution, if appropriate; and an occupational skill certificate (Jobs for the Future, 1994).

Linkages, Similarities, and Differences

A number of prominent school-to-work observers see a close connection between service-learning and school-to-work. For example, Kenneth Hoyt (1994), the primary advocate of career education for the past 25 years, recognizes "the reality and importance" of both paid and unpaid work in school-to-work transition (although he prefers the term school-to-employment). Mendel (1994) similarly views service-learning as a possible alternative to youth apprenticeships since a significant number of employees may be unable to participate in a youth apprenticeship system. He suggests that schools might wish to concentrate on apprentice-like or simulated workplace activities as well as service-learning.

Kazis (1993) also presents a strong case for linkages between service-learning and school-to-work initiatives. In fact, he asserts that there is far more experience with and financial resources committed to youth service than to youth apprenticeships. Kazis conceives the two as complementary initiatives in that both have the goal of getting young people out of classrooms and into situations where they learn to assume responsibilities and acquire both employability and work skills. Service-learning differs from apprenticeships, however, not only in the fact that service-learning experiences are unpaid, but also that they generally are located in organizations designed to improve communities. Moreover, they do not provide jobs in the private sector nor focus on a multi-year, structured progression of skills' development in a particular industry.

On the other hand, Kazis recognizes that service-learning goes beyond work experiences by incorporating lessons learned from the workplace into the classroom. For example, students in mathematics and science classes may be involved in cleaning a local stream bed and studying the ecology of the community; students in social sciences classes might examine environmental regulation policies. Kazis suggests that the integration of service and learning parallels youth apprenticeship's emphasis on integrating school-based and work-based experiences and that service-learning and such school-to-work initiatives as youth apprenticeships can be promoted as two elements of a single initiative. For example, some schools have explored the notion of a planned curriculum sequence, i.e., introducing service-learning in the early high school years and then moving toward apprenticeships when students reach working age. Such approaches can provide exposure to both private and public sector opportunities, highlight the interconnections between the economy and society, and "provide two important venues for 'real world' experiences and for structured learning built on those experiences" (p. 13).

The Council of Chief State Schools Officers (1994) in a memorandum of 8/8/94 summarized several relevant concerns by pointing out that both approaches have much in common in that they contextualize student learnings -- whether those learnings stem from the classroom, workplace, or service initiative. Both provide environments in which students can develop various skills and competencies, including those identified by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) that are important for employability and responsible citizenship; both provide students with meaningful roles in their communities; and both foster collaboration between educators and community groups. The memorandum also presents several rationales for linking the two methodologies including the following: both have the potential to address such weaknesses as the lack of relevance of the curriculum or school experience; both can motivate students to want to learn; both can build meaningful community partnerships; and both focus on outcomes as a measurement of acquired skills and knowledge. Service-learning can help address issues of "scale and access" in school-to-work transition, i.e., since securing multiple work placements can be difficult, service-learning offers a wide array of opportunities that can help achieve school-to-work objectives. Combining the approaches in a "learning continuum" can provide even primary grade students with opportunities to develop generic work skills at an early age.

Furco (1995) also has pointed out the following similarities between the two reform efforts: (1) both are based on the experiential education realization that we tend to remember ten percent of what we read, 20 percent of what we hear, 30 percent of what we see, 50 percent of what we see and hear, 70 percent of what we say, and 90 percent of what we both say and do; (2) both view students as active learners, producers of knowledge, and providers of help; (3) both use such similar instructional approaches as contextual learning, applications of knowledge beyond the classroom, interdisciplinary curricula, and cooperative learning; (4) both require schools to establish formal partnerships with outside entities; and (5) both need to address such program issues as transportation to service and work sites, liability concerns, and the integration of in-school and out-of-school experiences.

Differences between the two efforts obviously exist. Again, Furco (1995) noted several. First, with regard to intended purposes, service-learning would place academic development and civic responsibility as the highest goals, whereas school-to-work would place career development and academic development at the top of the list. Second, service-learning equally benefits students and the community, whereas in the school-to-work efforts the students are the primary intended beneficiaries. Third, payments are discouraged in service-learning but encouraged in school-to-work. Fourth, in service-learning, knowledge is the main focus, whereas in school-to-work efforts skills are the main focus. Furco also notes that the funding sources are different, i.e., the National and Community Service Trust Act for service-learning; Perkins, JTPA, and School-to-Work Opportunities Act funds support school-to-work initiatives.

Since schools must contend with a variety of competing reform initiatives, Brynelson and Furco (1994) observe that these two compatible approaches reinforce and validate one another and, hence, can "invigorate" school reform efforts. They also see common purposes in the joint legislative thrusts in that both attempt to achieve their goals by enhancing students' active engagement in learning and both rely on forming partnerships between schools and community groups. On the other hand, service-learning attempts to develop such general skills as civic responsibility and critical thinking, whereas school-to-work programs concentrate on developing specific occupational and vocational skills.

Key Issues

Although the linkages appear natural and logical, few concrete efforts have been made to bring the two initiatives closer together. The CCSSO memorandum, therefore, identified six relevant issues that must be addressed. (1) Since experiential education is still considered by many to be non-academic, an effort must be made to extend experiential outcomes beyond the affective areas. (2) Differences exist in terminology and conceptual focus. (3) Studies need to be conducted on why previous efforts may not have been successful, which barriers to and key elements of change are evident, and which experiences provide the greatest student success. (4)Teachers need on-going professional development, clarification of their roles and responsibilities, support and other assistance in establishing relationships with employees, and -- most importantly -- sufficient time to work with other teachers and non-school personnel in planning and implementation activities. (5) Communities also must be made aware of their roles and responsibilities and must understand both the educational and developmental goals and processes. (6) States need guidance and support in moving beyond categorical program and funding approaches. The CCSSO also feels strongly that Goals 2000 can serve as the foundation for comprehensive systemic educational reform and that both service-learning and school-to-work efforts need to link with other networks and establish collaborative relationships in designing and implementing initiatives. Such networks include community development organizations that focus on the role of youth in the change process, career development programs, and national educational reform initiatives.

Brynelson and Furco (1994) also suggest that several issues still remain unresolved. For example, the question of compensation is still basically an open issue. Secondly, programmatic difficulties exist, e.g., identifying appropriate work and service opportunities, establishing program requirements and student assessment criteria, developing transportation and liability plans, and conducting training for school staff and business and/or community

personnel. Moreover, the need exists (1) for formal research and evaluation of both efforts from the policy and program perspectives and (2) for states to encourage, fund, and provide incentives to local school partnerships that combine the two reform approaches. Lastly, they note that "as local schools and communities plan and implement their reform efforts, they should support those plans which meet the central purposes of both reforms and optimize their potential for receiving funds from both acts" (p. 3).

Lastly, Hamilton and Hamilton (1994) assert that all young people should engage in community service since it gives them experiences similar to work even though the experiences are unpaid. Since such unpaid experiences may lead to paid work experiences for some young people, the experiences could be the only form of work-based learning for some students. The relationship between the approaches is illustrated in what the Hamiltons have termed "learning opportunities at school and work." They conclude that service-learning can be, and has been, both the precursor of and companion to job shadowing, youth-run enterprises, exploratory work experiences, youth jobs and employment training, unpaid internships, cooperative education, and youth apprenticeships. In short, a kinship clearly exists between service-learning and school-to-work transition. They are truly first cousins in systemic educational reform.

References

Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform. (1993). Standards of quality for school-based service-learning. Equity & Excellence in Education. 26(2), 71-73.

Brynelson, & Furco, A. (1994). School-to-work transition programs and service-learning. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Service-Learning Research and Development Center.

Council of Chief State School Officers. (1994). Summary of the 7/22/94 discussion and examples of service-learning models with a school-to-work focus. Washington, DC: Author.

Furco, A. (1995). Service-learning and school-to-work transition programs. Presentation at the 1995 National Service-Learning Conference, March 9, 1995. Philadelphia, PA.

Hamilton, S. F., & Hamilton, M. A. (1994). Opening career paths for youth: What can be done? who can do it? Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.

Hoyt, K. B. (1994). Career education and transition from schooling-to-employment. Youth Policy. 15 & 16 (12 & 1), 10-19.

Jobs for the Future. (1994). Learning that works: A school-to-work briefing book. Boston, MA: Author.

Kazis, R. (1993). Improving the transition from school to work in the United States. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum, Competitiveness Policy Council, and Jobs for the Future.

Mendel, R. (1994). The American school-to-career movement: A background paper for policymakers and foundation officers. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.

Bob Bhaerman is a Senior R&D Specialist at Research for Better Schools, the regional laboratory for the Mid-Atlantic states located in Philadelphia. Prior to this, he served as an R&D specialist at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education when the center was located at Ohio State.